

ORGANIC ASSOCIATION OF KENTUCKY 14TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



GROUNDING IN ORGANICS
FROM SOIL TO MARKET

JANUARY 23-25, 2025

Frankfort, Kentucky





KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

Land Grant Program



Academics · Research · Extension

Kentucky State University's Cooperative Extension Program is committed to solving problems faced by those who have limited social and economic resources and to improving the quality of life and vitality of communities and individuals throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

To learn more, contact: kysuag@gmail.com · www.kysu.edu/ag · [@kysuag](https://twitter.com/kysuag)

**Ask us
about our
Small-Scale
Farm Grant
Program!**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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Organic Association of Kentucky

OAK MISSION

OAK is a state-wide nonprofit organization founded by farmers, for farmers. OAK works to advance organic regenerative agriculture to improve the health of the environment and our communities.

We are focused on growing ecological resilience, economic viability and socially just futures for Kentucky farmers through educational, technical and market resources.

Dear Conference Attendees,

On behalf of the Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK), welcome to the 14th Annual Organic Farming Conference! We're thrilled to have you here as part of this growing community of farmers, researchers, agricultural professionals, advocates and changemakers.

This conference is a celebration of the vibrant, resilient and innovative organic farming community we've built together across the region. It's a space for sharing ideas, gaining new insights and forming connections that will help shape the future of organic agriculture in our state.

Over the next few days, you'll have the opportunity to learn from industry experts, engage in meaningful discussions and connect with like-minded individuals who are as passionate about organic agriculture as you are. I invite you to make the most of this time together. Whether you're here to learn, network or collaborate, we hope you leave feeling inspired and equipped with fresh ideas to take your farming practices to the next level.

We are grateful to share these conference days with you.



Brooke Gentile
Executive Director



OAK CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:

Maggie Dungan, Steve Muntz, Julia Sampson, Tonya Smith, Brooke Gentile, Jenny Howard Owen and Shannon Post

2026 OAK CONFERENCE JANUARY 29-31



**SAVE THE DATE
FOR THE 2026 OAK
CONFERENCE:
JANUARY 29-31,
2026!**

#OAK2026 will be in
Shepherdsville, KY, at
the Paroquet Springs
Conference Centre. Mark
your calendar today!



**TAKE THE CONFERENCE
SURVEY**



Team OAK welcomes and
appreciates your feedback on this
year's conference! Your response
helps plan next year's conference
content and OAK programming
throughout the year. The survey
takes about 10 minutes to complete.

ENGAGE WITH SLIDO!

Some sessions will use Slido for audience participation
during the Q&A. Download the Slido app, visit Slido.com on
an internet browser or raise a hand for assistance from a
Slido volunteer who can input questions from the audience.
Join the OAK Conference Slido by entering the code
#OAK2025 at Slido.com or use this QR Code:



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**KENTUCKY STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Land Grant Program

KITCHEN

**MEETING
ROOM
C**

**MEETING
ROOM
B**

**MEETING
ROOM
A**

RESTROOMS

VENDOR HALLWAY

**ATRIUM/
ENTRANCE**

OUTDOOR PATIO

OAK PROGRAMS

Join exciting learning opportunities and access technical assistance, resources and incentives throughout the year. Learn more about OAK's new and expanded programs online, or stop by the OAK table and speak with our staff.

FARMER FIELD DAYS, WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

These year-round on-farm and farm-based events provide growers, graziers and farmers with multiple opportunities to walk the land of a Kentucky host farm; share about organic and regenerative crop, livestock and agroforestry systems and learn which successful business tools and relevant research applications are used by peer farmers. Experience community learning with peers and agricultural professionals. Explore past event summaries and recordings on OAK's website and YouTube channel. Watch for 2025 updates in our newsletters and on our website.



LEARN MORE

ORGANIC TRANSITION PROGRAM

OAK's Organic Transition Program is the key to success in pursuing organic certification. Organic Transition staff are ready to assist producers in developing farm transition plans, navigating regulations and production practices, creating farm maps, consulting on approved inputs and more. The technical assistance is free to Kentucky farmers and can be paired with OAK's Organic Farmer Mentorship program. The year-long mentorship program is a paid opportunity for mentor farmers, and the knowledge transfer is invaluable to mentee farmers. The pair meet monthly, visit one another's farm once and attend one in-person event together. Apply to join the mentorship program as a mentor or mentee.



LEARN MORE

CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE

OAK's Conservation Outreach is an expanded offering focused on conservation practices for urban agriculture and small-scale conservation across Kentucky. This project offers Field Days, webinars, farm visits, one-on-one consultation and deep relationship-building to connect more farmers with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. Learn more about conservation through land stewardship and schedule a free call with OAK's Conservation Coordinator today.



LEARN MORE

ORGANIC PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

OAK's organic production consultation services provide dedicated organic production technical assistance to commercial farmers in Kentucky who are using or interested in adopting organic practices. Through phone and virtual meetings and on-farm consultations, OAK's Organic Production Specialist can support farmers with planning, management, expansion and troubleshooting in crop and livestock systems.



LEARN MORE

KENTUCKY FARM SHARE COALITION (KYFSC)

Each year, the Kentucky Farm Share Coalition (KYFSC), administered by OAK, connects partner farms with workplaces and community partners to provide local vegetable boxes through CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). This initiative delivers over 1,000 shares in more than 20 counties, serving over 20,000 CSA customers annually. KYFSC partners with employers to offer customized wellness programs that promote CSAs, support employee health, and expand market opportunities for local farmers. Through this program, the coalition increases both the supply and demand of fresh foods and fosters strong investment in Kentucky's food economy.



LEARN MORE

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT OAK'S PROGRAMS,
VISIT WWW.OAK-KY.ORG OR
CONTACT INFO@OAK-KY.ORG
OR (502) 219-7378.**



OAK PROGRAMS CONTINUED

SOIL HEALTH AND CLIMATE-SMART PROJECT

OAK staff and our partners are working with farmers and buyers in Kentucky to promote the adoption of climate-smart farming practices and develop markets for climate-smart commodities through this five-year USDA project. The project supports Kentucky farmers in telling the full story of farming systems and the environmental benefits of organic and conservation practices, using the Global Farm Metric-Farm Sustainability Assessment Tool to measure social, economic and environmental indicators on farms. The project provides direct technical, educational, financial and market support for enrolled Kentucky farmers while working to grow regional market demand for climate-smart commodities. This project offers monetary incentives to farmers who want to implement climate-smart practices (e.g., cover cropping, perennial planting, rotational grazing), collect data on their operation's climate impact and engage with emerging markets. Learn more about the project and apply for Year Two now.



LEARN MORE



KENTUCKY PRODUCTION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

OAK has developed resources to help farmers find services, source supplies, make crop plans, keep important records and more. For questions about how to use and adapt these resources for your operation, email Sarah Geurkink (sarah@oak-ky.org).

Kentucky Production & Technical Assistance Catalog: a farmer-generated resource that aggregates producer insights and sourcing preferences. Use it to find what you need, and add your go-to sources.

OAK Vegetable Crop Planning Tool: establish a new vegetable crop production plan or organize your existing one. This template allows farmers to generate separate greenhouse and planting schedules from a primary crop plan.

OAK Field and Tunnel Maps Template: map out your crop and rotation plan as you build it and visualize it throughout the growing season.

OAK Organic Record-Keeping Template: establish record-keeping best practices that align with Organic Certification requirements. This tool includes a spreadsheet and connected Google forms for growers who want to use their phones to quickly input records from the field.

OAK Soil Test Aggregation and Records Tool: visualize and track your soil test results and changes over several years.



**VIEW THE
RESOURCES**

OAK MEMBERSHIP

BECOME AN OAK MEMBER

OAK Membership is for all. Join OAK, and together we can create a more resilient, regenerative and organic food system. Your membership helps OAK deliver educational programming, provide community outreach and enhance market opportunities for growers across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Enjoy member registration pricing to OAK events and access member savings to popular retailers. OAK members at the “Family Farming” level and above may select to be listed on OAK’s Find-a-Farm Directory. Thanks for being with us - your membership helps power OAK’s programs!



Stay connected with OAK!

Sign up for the monthly e-newsletters at the OAK registration table to receive updates on events and resources.

Find us on social media

@OrganicAssociationofKentucky

Use the hashtag #OAK2025 to share your favorite conference photos, tips and quotes.

**BECOME
AN OAK
MEMBER
NOW**



\$20 Student
\$40 Individual
\$0 Equity Individual Grower
\$70 Family Farmer
\$0 Equity Family Farmer
\$120 Supporter
\$500 AgriBusiness

MEMBER SURVEY

OAK Members, please take our brief annual member survey! This year OAK will engage in strategic planning, and your valuable input is needed to shape future programming. Remember, OAK is a member-driven organization and your feedback is critical to the decision-making process.



**TAKE THE
SURVEY**



INTERESTED IN AGROFORESTRY, FOREST FARMING AND NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS (NTFPs)?

OAK and Grow Appalachia, along with nine other partners, are collaborating on a project led by Virginia Tech to accelerate Appalachia’s forest farming industry and grow the market for non-timber forest products in Central Appalachia. This includes medicinal plants, edible products such as mushrooms and honey and ornamental products like garlands and burl and landscape products. Are you growing, managing or harvesting these crops and have insights to share about what the industry needs in Kentucky? Interested in learning more about the opportunities but unsure where to start? Share your insights!

**TAKE THE
SURVEY**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OAK’S PROGRAMS, VISIT WWW.OAK-KY.ORG OR
CONTACT INFO@OAK-KY.ORG OR (502) 219-7378.**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

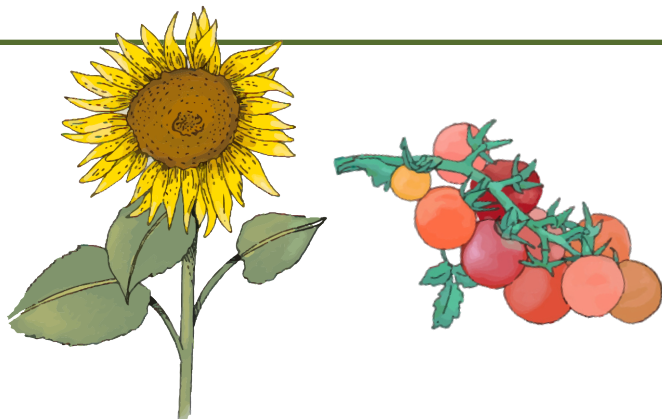
ALL TIMES EASTERN

ROOM	MEETING ROOM C	MEETING ROOM B	MEETING ROOM A
8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	REGISTRATION / COFFEE & TEA		
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM	AGROFORESTRY IN PRACTICE: ADDING PERENNIALS TO THE FARMSCAPE Marissa Arnoldussen, <i>OAK</i> Daniel Mays, <i>Frith Farm</i> Margaret Shea, <i>Dropseed Native Plant Nursery</i> Ian Zeglin, <i>Greenacres Foundation</i> Jesse Frost, <i>Rough Draft Farmstead</i> - <i>Moderator</i>	WALK-BEHIND TRACTORS A TO Z: HISTORY, APPLICATIONS, USE AND MAINTENANCE Joel Dufour, <i>Earth Tools</i> Maggie Dungan, <i>Salad Days Farm</i>	DEALING WITH THE SQUEEZE: FINDING PROFIT WHEN ALL INPUT COSTS ARE HIGH Ellen Polishuk, <i>Plant to Profit</i> Adam Barr, <i>Barr Farms</i>
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	LUNCH PROVIDED BY LOCAL'S FOOD HUB AND PIZZA PUB		
1:30 PM - 5:00 PM	SILVOPASTURE IN THE EASTERN HARDWOOD FORESTS Greg Brann, <i>Big Spring Farm/</i> <i>Greg Brann Consulting</i> Brett Chedzoy, <i>Cornell Cooperative</i> <i>Extension/Angus Glen Farms</i> Marissa Arnoldussen, <i>OAK</i> - <i>Moderator</i>	STORAGE CROP SUCCESS: POTATOES, SWEET POTATOES AND WINTER SQUASH Jeff Poppen, <i>Long Hungry Creek Farm</i>	MINI-MASTERMIND FOR EXPERIENCED GROWERS Ellen Polishuk, <i>Plant to Profit</i> Sarah Geurkink, <i>OAK</i>

#OAK2025 - OAK'S 14TH ANNUAL FARMING CONFERENCE

MEET THE PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP SPEAKERS

View speaker biographies and photos on the OAK website at oak-ky.org/speakers. View a printed copy at the OAK registration table, or use this QR code:



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PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOPS | 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

AGROFORESTRY IN PRACTICE: ADDING PERENNIALS TO THE FARMSCAPE

Marissa Arnoldussen, *Organic Association
of Kentucky*

Jesse Frost (*Moderator*), *Rough Draft
Farmstead*

Daniel Mays, *Frith Farm*

Ian Zeglin, *Greenacres Foundation*

Margaret Shea, *Dropseed Native Plant
Nursery*

Native perennial plantings can reduce erosion, pest, weed and wind challenges; create pollinator and wildlife habitat, enhance farm aesthetics for farmers and agritourism and add product diversity to farms. This pre-conference workshop provides farm success stories, resources for native plant selection and details on technical and financial assistance available for on-farm implementation.

Moderated by Jesse Frost, informed by his farming experience and dozens of farmer interviews, this workshop brings together a unique combination of hedgerow, border garden, alley cropping and native plant expertise from four presenters: Marissa Arnoldussen of OAK, Daniel Mays of Frith Farm, Margaret Shea of Dropseed Native Plant Nursery and Ian Zeglin of Greenacres Foundation. This workshop covers site, design and species selection; regional native plants, including edibles; propagation, establishment and maintenance best practices; multi-year, dynamic crop planning with perennials and annuals; beneficial insect and pollinator habitats; ecological benefits and potential new revenue streams.

Join this workshop to learn about successful agroforestry practices with pragmatic applications on any Kentucky farm.

WALK-BEHIND TRACTORS A TO Z: HISTORY, APPLICATIONS, USE AND MAINTENANCE

Joel Dufour, *Earth Tools*

Maggie Dungan, *Salad Days Farm*

What IS a walk-behind tractor? What can it DO? What CAN'T it do? Joel Dufour brings 40 years of experience with walk-behind tractors to this hands-on workshop, where farmers will learn the ins and outs of this machinery that has useful applications on many Kentucky farms. Farmer Maggie Dungan will share her tips, tricks and experience with walk-behind tractors on her farm. In this workshop, farmers will learn when walk-behind tractors are the right machine for their farms and take a deep dive into how to use and maintain them. This workshop will start with a presentation indoors and conclude in one of the farm's shop buildings with a hands-on maintenance session.

This workshop will take place partly outdoors; please dress for the weather.

DEALING WITH THE SQUEEZE: FINDING PROFIT WHEN ALL INPUT COSTS ARE HIGH

Ellen Polishuk, *Plant to Profit*

Adam Barr, *Barr Farms*

Post-COVID, the boom for local food has subsided, and labor is hard to find and more expensive than ever. Getting a profitable bottom line is tough. This workshop explores what "levers" diversified vegetable farmers can use to pull the proverbial profit rabbit out of the hat of their farm business. Join this workshop with renowned educator Ellen Polishuk, who will help farmers conceptualize where they can exert leverage to pull profit from their farms and explore how capturing farm metrics can lead to profit-making farm plans. Topics covered in this workshop will include: getting clear on what profit is; levers of price, cost and yield and a crop-

costing exercise to help "expose" winners and losers. Farmers who participate in this engaging deep-dive into farm business management will walk away with an increased understanding of where their farms may be losing money and which recordkeeping best practices and priorities can bring them one step closer to the goal of operating a profitable and fulfilling farm business.

WORKSHOPS | 1:30 - 5:00 PM

SILVOPASTURE IN THE EASTERN HARDWOOD FORESTS

Greg Brann, *Greg Brann Consulting /
Big Spring Farm*

Brett Chedzoy, *Cornell Cooperative
Extension of Schuyler County /
Angus Glen Farms LLC*

Marissa Arnoldussen (*Moderator*),
Organic Association of Kentucky

Silvopasture practices in many forms and scales are expanding across farm landscapes in the Eastern U.S.; allowing graziers of pastured livestock to provide shade, diversify market products and protect woodlands and water quality. Join this workshop with Greg Brann and Brett Chedzoy for an in-depth conversation on successful experiences creating and managing silvopastures on typical grazing operations, including:

- Adding (planting) and subtracting (thinning) trees to create opportunities for silvopasturing
- Establishing productive forages under existing trees and balancing proper shade and sunlight levels
- Using livestock as the workforce to improve system productivity over time and reduce the presence of noxious plants
- Working with technical assistance professionals to support larger projects

This comprehensive silvopasture workshop will help beginning and intermediate graziers alike to take their practices to the next level.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS CONTINUED

STORAGE CROP SUCCESS: POTATOES, SWEET POTATOES AND WINTER SQUASH

Jeff Poppen, Long Hungry Creek Farm

Storage crops can add market possibilities to a farm's off-season business, providing a steady income for the lean months. In this workshop, Jeff Poppen will share decades of production experience with potatoes, sweet potatoes and butternut squash. Jeff will cover soil preparation techniques for potatoes like cutting, chitting, planting, cultivating and hilling so that no one needs to step into the field from sowing until harvest. He will use fifty years of sweet potato experience to illuminate saving "seed," making beds, cutting slips, planting in ridges, thorough cultivation, digging and storage in detail. Jeff will explore soil preparation, varietal selection, planting, cultivation, harvest and

storage of butternut squash to make it a profitable addition to farmers' crop production. Join this workshop for a comprehensive exploration of growing these three popular storage crops using organic practices on your market farm.

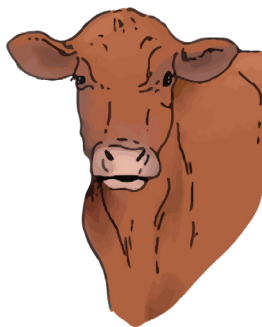
MINI-MASTERMIND FOR EXPERIENCED GROWERS

Ellen Polishuk, Plant to Profit
Sarah Geurkink, Organic Association
of Kentucky

Join the dynamic facilitator and teacher Ellen Polishuk and fellow farmers for a mini version of the renowned Mastermind, an invaluable group learning experience. This workshop will help experienced vegetable producers find new solutions to shared farming problems. Participants will discuss challenges, resources

and creative solutions in diversified vegetable production. Participants will determine workshop topics through a pre-conference survey and feedback during this engaging workshop. Examples include production hot spots (weeds, pests, diseases, rotation, variety selection, crop system), recordkeeping, sourcing (tools, equipment, technical assistance), labor management, software, quality of life and more. Ellen Polishuk brings 30 years of experience in profitable production farming and a proven system for creating comfortable spaces where farmers can push one

another toward their goals. Participants will leave this workshop with practical and actionable next steps toward a more profitable, enjoyable, sustainable farm business.



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SESSION INFORMATION

ORGANIC FARMER PANEL

OPENING SESSION: 9:00 - 10:15 AM



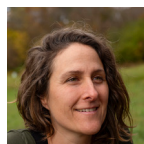
Larry
Brandenburg
Harmony
Fields Farm



Daniel Mays
Frith Farm



Keith
McKenzie
Knob Hill
Farm



Cortney
Moses
GoodThymes
Organic Farm



Lisa
Munniksma
(Moderator)
Freelance
Writer

Organic farming is often defined as production systems that promote and enhance biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. While this is true, it leaves out the human aspects of life as an organic farmer. Hear from this farmer panel representing four organic farms on the day-to-day experiences of farming that span a much broader reality than production alone. The farmers will discuss their journeys navigating off-farm jobs or full-time farming, work-life



balance and lifestyle demands, time management, labor challenges and topics prompted by audience questions. These farmers will offer insights into what has kept or keeps them grounded in organics, with lessons and inspiration for Kentucky's farming community.

SESSIONS | 10:30 - 11:45 AM

STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE FERTILIZER USE AND IMPROVE PROFITABILITY ON KENTUCKY CATTLE FARMS

Greg Halich, University of Kentucky Extension

For cattle and livestock farmers who want to learn grazing practices that reduce costs while increasing long-term productivity, this session highlights production methods like managing legumes, feeding hay to recycle nutrients, utilizing weeds to build fertility and using bale grazing to mitigate drought and build a fall stockpile. Greg Halich will also share strategies to reduce infrastructure costs: rotation management techniques that do not require perfect infrastructure, “living tree” fencing method where trees are utilized as fence posts in conjunction with lumber “slats” and siphoning out of springs and ponds for added watering points. This session concludes with a case study of a farm dependent on commercial fertilizers and how biological fertility was restored over time.

The content in this session is designed for farmers with 5+ years of farming experience.

SOIL SOLARIZATION IN HIGH TUNNELS FOR MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES, NEMATODES, AND WEEDS

Nicole Gauthier, University of Kentucky
Ron McMaine, McMaine's Riverhaven Farm
Rachel Rudolph, University of Kentucky

Soil solarization involves covering soil with a transparent plastic sheet to trap radiant energy from the sun to heat the soil to temperatures that can kill certain pests or pathogens. It can serve as an effective, pesticide-free method for managing soilborne pathogens, plant-parasitic nematodes, insect pests and weeds. Although the most effective soil solarization period in Kentucky is mid-summer, late spring and early fall solarization have shown to significantly reduce soilborne pathogens and plant-parasitic nematodes after four to six weeks. Drs. Gauthier and Rudolph will provide growers with stepwise methods for maximizing soil temperatures to manage difficult soil-related pests. Farmer Ron McMaine of Riverhaven Farm will discuss his experience with soil solarization. This session will also include example scenarios to provide growers with options for incorporating soil solarization into their farm operations.

FARMER-LED TRIALS: HOW TO PLAN, CONDUCT AND FUND ON-FARM RESEARCH

Maggie Dungan, Salad Days Farm
Brian Geier, Organic Farming Research Foundation

Research shows that farmers benefit when they lead on-farm research trials at their farms. Join this session designed to empower farmers with the tools and knowledge to conduct effective on-farm research on their own or collaboratively. Brian Geier will introduce Organic Farming Research Foundation's (OFRF) Farmers Guide to Conducting On-Farm Research and highlight OFRF's Organic Research Hub and Farmer-Led Trials (FLT), open to certified organic farms and those in transition (applications open in October). Farmer Maggie Dungan will share her firsthand experience in the FLT program researching the effects of soil solarization on soil health. Participants will learn about making strong research proposals to programs like OFRF's FLT program, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program and other research funding streams.

The content in this session is designed for farmers with 5+ years of farming experience.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

ALL TIMES EASTERN

ROOM	MEETING ROOM C		MEETING ROOM B		MEETING ROOM A	
8:15 AM - 8:45 AM	REGISTRATION / COFFEE & TEA					
8:25 - 8:40 AM FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT “STRETCH BREAK” - RIGHT WALL OF MTG RM A - with Delia Scott						
8:45 AM - 9:00 AM	WELCOME: OAK AND KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY					
9:00 AM - 10:15 AM	OPENING SESSION: ORGANIC FARMER PANEL Larry Brandenburg, <i>Harmony Fields Farm</i> ; Daniel Mays, <i>Frith Farm</i> ; Keith McKenzie, <i>Knob Hill Farm</i> ; Cortney Moses, <i>GoodThymes Organic Farm</i> ; Lisa Munniksma, <i>Freelance Writer</i> - Moderator					
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE FERTILIZER USE AND IMPROVE PROFITABILITY ON KY CATTLE FARMS Greg Halich, <i>University of Kentucky</i>		SOIL SOLARIZATION IN HIGH TUNNELS FOR MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES, NEMATODES AND WEEDS Nicole Gauthier and Rachel Rudolph, <i>University of Kentucky</i> Ron McMaine, <i>McMaine River Farm</i>		FARMER-LED TRIALS: HOW TO PLAN, CONDUCT, AND FUND ON-FARM RESEARCH Maggie Dungan, <i>Salad Days Farm</i> Brian Geier, <i>Organic Farming Research Foundation</i>	
11:45 AM - 1:15 PM	LUNCH PROVIDED BY FARM TO FORK					
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM	GRAZING THE WAY TOWARDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION Amanda Gumbert, <i>University of Kentucky</i> Cody Rakes, <i>Loretto Motherhouse Farm</i>		RESOURCE ROUNDTABLE: ORGANIC HORTICULTURE IN KENTUCKY Kirk Pomper, <i>Kentucky State University</i> Ric Bessin, Cindy Finneseth, Kim Leonberger and Rachel Rudolph, <i>University of Kentucky</i> Sarah Geurkink, <i>OAK</i>		GINGER AND TURMERIC: FROM ROOT TO VALUE-ADDED PRODUCT Jesse Buie, <i>Ole Brook Organics</i>	
2:15-2:45 PM TRADE SHOW 2:20-2:40 PM FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT “STRETCH BREAK” - MTG RM A - with Delia Scott						
2:45 PM - 4:00 PM	FARMER ROUNDTABLE: ROTATIONAL GRAZING DeeAnn Bauerle, <i>Bauerle Family Farms</i> Brett Chedzoy, <i>Angus Glen Farms</i> Greg Halich, <i>University of Kentucky</i> Cody Rakes, <i>Loretto Motherhouse Farm</i>		PFAS: WHAT KENTUCKY FARMERS NEED TO KNOW Tom FitzGerald, <i>KY Resources Council</i> Nima Kulkarni, <i>KY State Representative</i> Jason Unrine, <i>University of Kentucky</i> Jamie Wise, <i>University of Louisville</i> (virtual)		TO TILL OR NOT TO TILL Ellen Polishuk, <i>Plant to Profit</i>	
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM	FARMER HACKS Jacqueline Berry, <i>Flourishing Herbs Farm</i> Dusty Gossett, <i>Gossett Farms</i> Ken Marks, <i>Floyds View Farm</i> Jackson Rolett, <i>Apostles Garden</i>		FEDERAL POLICY AND YOUR FARM Kimberly Ishmael and Laurie White, <i>Community Farm Alliance</i>		DIVE INTO UK'S CSA HANDBOOK: UTILIZING AND DEVELOPING CROP PRODUCTION RESOURCES Kristi Durbin, <i>University of Kentucky</i> Paul Merryweather, <i>Ashbourne Farms</i>	
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	GATHER AND GROW: OAK ANNUAL MEETING & EVENING SOCIAL					
TRADE SHOW HOURS: 8:30AM - 5:30PM #OAK2025 - OAK'S 14TH ANNUAL FARMING CONFERENCE						

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

ALL TIMES EASTERN

ROOM	MEETING ROOM C	MEETING ROOM B	MEETING ROOM A
8:15 AM - 8:45 AM	REGISTRATION / COFFEE & TEA		
8:25 - 8:40 AM FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT “STRETCH BREAK” - RIGHT WALL OF MTG RM A - with Monet Proctor			
8:45 AM - 9:00 AM	WELCOME: OAK		
9:00 AM - 10:15 AM	KEYNOTE: IMPROVING SMALL FARM SUCCESS WITH ORGANIC FARMING, SOIL HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY Jesse Buie, <i>Ole Brook Organics</i>		
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO BIOCHAR ADOPTION Laura Freeman, <i>Mt Folly Farm</i> Aysha Tapp-Ross, <i>American Farmland Trust</i>	ONIONS MAKE THE MEAL: GROWING ONIONS ORGANICALLY Jeff Poppen, <i>Long Hungry Creek Farm</i>	HOW TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE FARM Fatima Jackson, <i>Action Jackson Farms</i> Candace Pollock-Moore, <i>Southern SARE</i> Paul Vincelli, <i>University of Kentucky</i>
11:45 AM - 1:15 PM	LUNCH PROVIDED BY FARM TO FORK		
1:15 PM - 2:30 PM	WHAT’S THE SCOOP ON POOP? MANURE CHARACTERISTICS AND APPLICATION RATES Tammy Barnes, <i>NCAT</i> Randy Smallwood, <i>NRCS-Kentucky</i>	CROPS UNDER COVER! YIELDING THE ADVANTAGES OF PROTECTIVE ROW COVERS John Bell, <i>Elmwood Stock Farm</i> Maggie Dungan, <i>Salad Days Farm</i> Keith McKenzie, <i>Knob Hill Farm</i> Sharon Stone, <i>Two Suns Farm</i> David Gonthier, <i>Katie Fiske and Elaine Losekamp, University of Kentucky</i>	USING THE POWER OF VISUAL APPEAL TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS Chelsea Barbour, <i>High Five Farm</i> Kayla Carey, <i>Kentucky Flower Market</i> Brett Wolff, <i>University of Kentucky</i>
2:30 - 2:45 PM FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT “STRETCH BREAK” - RIGHT WALL OF MTG RM A - with Monet Proctor			
2:45 PM - 3:45 PM	HOW TO FARM FOREVER Joseph Monroe, <i>Valley Spirit</i> David Robb, <i>Eden Prairie Farm</i>	ORGANIC MENTORSHIP: THE COMPASS TO SUCCESS Holly Chiantaretto, <i>Hallow Springs Farm</i> Evelenia Mitchell, <i>PercyAnnie Farms</i> Jesse Buie, <i>Ole Brook Organics</i> Kenya Abraham, <i>OAK</i>	PRACTICAL POLLINATOR SUPPORT FOR KENTUCKY FARMS Kevin Archer, <i>Dandelion Ridge Farm</i> Alexis Gauger, <i>University of Kentucky</i>
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM	FARMER FORUM: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND COLLECTIVE RESOURCES FOR KENTUCKY ORGANIC FARMERS	DROUGHT RESISTANCE AND INTERNATIONAL CROPS IN THE AGE OF CLIMATE CRISIS Mateo Barnett, <i>Common Earth Gardens</i> Om Ha, <i>Mindat Community Garden of Louisville</i>	PRINCIPLES OF CONTOUR LINES’ AGROFORESTRY Thomas Leonard, <i>Contour Lines</i>
TRADE SHOW HOURS: 8:30AM - 4:15PM #OAK2025 - OAK’S 14TH ANNUAL FARMING CONFERENCE			

SESSION INFORMATION CONTINUED

SESSIONS | 1:15 - 2:15 PM

GRAZING THE WAY TOWARDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

Amanda Gumbert, University of Kentucky
Cody Rakes, Loretto Motherhouse Farm

Grazing techniques and conservation programs can be valuable partners in improving soil health and water conservation on farms. Join this session to learn effective grazing techniques to achieve soil and water conservation goals and hear about a platform designed to help farmers get real answers to conservation questions from the real experts: other farmers engaged in conservation (or interested in getting started).

RESOURCE ROUNDTABLE: ORGANIC HORTICULTURE IN KENTUCKY

Ric Bessin, University of Kentucky
Cindy Finneseth, University of Kentucky
Department of Horticulture
Sarah Geurkink, Organic Association of Kentucky
Kim Leonberger, University of Kentucky, Plant Pathology Extension
Kirk Pomper, Kentucky State University
Rachel Rudolph, University of Kentucky

Growing healthy crops brings new challenges each season for beginning and experienced farmers alike. As markets, climate and farming constraints change, University Extension can play an important role in advancing economically sustainable organic agriculture. This roundtable introduces a panel of Extension professionals developing research, outreach programs and resources to support producers in Kentucky. OAK's Organic Production Specialist will facilitate a discussion presenting real-life organic production scenarios and questions from Kentucky farmers. The panelists will explain their roles, the resources and services they offer and relevant strategies they recommend for these specific production challenges.

GINGER AND TURMERIC: FROM ROOT TO VALUE-ADDED PRODUCT

Jesse Buie, Ole Brook Organics

Conditions must be conducive for growing the tropical plants ginger and turmeric – Jesse Buie's were not. He embraced the challenge of growing turmeric and ginger in his home state of Mississippi after he was told by California farmers that he could not because the growing season was too short and too hot. Despite these obstacles, he produced viable, thriving crops that were first sold as roots and later developed into a private-label product sold in local stores. In this session, Jesse will share with farmers how to productively grow turmeric and ginger and how to get the most value from these crops.

SESSIONS | 2:45 - 4:00 PM

FARMER ROUNDTABLE: ROTATIONAL GRAZING

DeeAnn Bauerle, Bauerle Family Farms
Brett Chedzoy, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County / Angus Glen Farms LLC
Greg Halich, University Kentucky Extension and Grass-finished Cattle Farmer
Cody Rakes, Loretto Motherhouse Farm

Rotational grazing, involving active and intentional movement of livestock through multiple pastures, can take many forms to fit a farm's goals and realities. Hear from graziers (three beef and one dairy) about their pasture-based management systems, including improved forages, bale grazing, intensive rotations, mob grazing, silvopasturing and hay-feeding considerations, as well as the economic, animal health and soil health benefits of multiple grazing styles.

GATHER & GROW: MEMBER MEETING & SOCIAL

JANUARY 24, 5:30-7:30 PM

Gather with OAK members and friends for a meaningful and brief annual meeting, followed by time to socialize, snack and grow together. Get to know OAK's staff, board members and community in a relaxed and inviting setting. Both members and prospective members are welcome! Beverages and snacks will be provided.



FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT "STRETCH BREAK"

RIGHT WALL OF MEETING ROOM A

January 24 | 8:25-8:40 am & 2:25-2:40 pm
with Delia Scott

This standing- or chair-based stretch break prioritizes the sustained well-being of our farming community. Acknowledging the tendency of farmers to sometimes focus on the health of the farm more than their personal health, this session will guide participants through everyday accessible movements to keep them grounded and functioning optimally - positively impacting farmer wellness and farm function. No experience is necessary; all are welcome!

Meet the Stretch Break Leaders at oak-ky.org/speakers or use this QR code:



SESSION INFORMATION CONTINUED

PFAS: WHAT KENTUCKY FARMERS NEED TO KNOW

Tom FitzGerald, Kentucky Resources Council
Representative

Nima Kulkarni, Kentucky State
Representative (House District 40)

Jason Unrine, University of Kentucky

Dr. Jamie Wise, University of Louisville
Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of synthetic fluorinated chemicals linked to numerous negative health risks. They are found in food packaging, fabric and furniture coatings and, increasingly, in groundwater, food and human bodies. These "forever chemicals" are steadily emerging as a major hazard to organic and conventional farms and ranches in the United States. Learn more about the risk, prevention and reality of PFAS in agricultural and human environments from developing research, policy and practices in Kentucky. *Note: Dr. Jamie Wise will join this session virtually.*

TO TILL OR NOT TO TILL

Ellen Polishuk, Plant to Profit

No-Till is all the rage and is now part of many growers' marketing "key words." This session will rigorously explore what tillage is, what it can be good for and what its downsides are for farmers. Each farmer has to decide when and where to implement the use of soil disturbance. The more

farmers understand about soil and soil disturbance, the better decisions they can make and the more transparent they can be with customers. In this session, farmers will increase their understanding of how to do the best cost-benefit analysis of using different soil-disturbing tools on their farms.

SESSIONS | 4:15 - 5:15 PM

FARMER HACKS: INNOVATIONS ACROSS KENTUCKY

Jacqueline Berry, Flourishing Herbs Farm

Dusty Gossett, Gossett Farms

Ken Marks, Floyds View Farm

Jackson Rolett, Apostles Garden



Interested in what innovative farmers across Kentucky are doing to save time and resources and improve their farm systems and practices? Join this session to learn some tips and tricks from farmers Jacqueline Berry, Dusty Gossett, Jackson Rolett and Ken Marks. They will each share an on-farm innovation, from a laundry machine turned salad spinner, pantry staples for livestock, a handmade caterpillar tunnel door solution and DIY low-tunnels.

FEDERAL POLICY AND YOUR FARM

Kimmie Ishmael, Community Farm Alliance

Laurie White, Community Farm Alliance

Federal policy affects everything in agriculture - from funding to eligibility for programs, and research priorities to food safety requirements. Learn how

federal agriculture policy is formed and implemented and how farmers can have a voice in decision-making. Get updates on the current opportunities for change in Washington D.C. and how to take action. With the 2024 elections changing the composition of Congress, become oriented to the expected direction of leadership following the inauguration.

DIVE INTO UK'S CSA HANDBOOK: UTILIZING AND DEVELOPING CROP PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Kristi Durbin, University of Kentucky

Organic Farming Unit

Paul Merryweather, Ashbourne Farms

In 2022, Farmer Kristi Durbin completed a compilation of on-farm best practices rooted in years of recordkeeping, developing farm systems and honing production on the University of Kentucky's Community Supported Agriculture (UK-CSA) Farm. The result was a free, 300-page CSA production handbook featuring efficiency tips; customizable tools and crop management, harvest and post-harvest protocols; food safety and crop storage guidelines and more. Hear from an organic farmer on the benefits that his farm reaped from using the handbook to improve specialty crop production. Farmers will learn how the handbook can help improve their standard operating procedures (SOPs) and farm efficiency.

MEET THE FRIDAY SPEAKERS

View speaker biographies and photos on the OAK website at oak-ky.org/speakers. View a printed copy at the OAK registration table, or use this QR code:



SESSION INFORMATION



Jesse Buie
Ole Brook Organics

IMPROVING SMALL FARM SUCCESS WITH ORGANIC FARMING, SOIL HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY

KEYNOTE: 9:00 - 10:15 AM

Organic farming combines traditional soil-based practices passed down through generations with recent innovations and market opportunities, offering smaller farms a greater chance at business success. Jesse Buie will share his story of growing up connected to farming, learning the connection between soil health and human health, returning to farming as a career and lifestyle, advocating for soil health and organic integrity, working with different generations of farmers and incorporating high- and low-tech solutions into tried and true production practices.

SESSIONS | 10:30-11:45 AM

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO BIOCHAR ADOPTION

Laura Freeman, Mt. Folly Farm /

Mt. Folly Enterprises

Aysha Tapp Ross, American Farmland Trust

Managing soils with charred biomass (biochar) has been practiced for centuries, originating with Native peoples who created the terra preta soils of the Amazon Basin. However, centuries of practice and decades of research have not yet translated into widespread adoption of biochar in today's agricultural production systems. Aysha Tapp Ross, Soil Scientist with American Farmland Trust, and Laura Freeman of Mt. Folly Farm will walk through the decision-making and process of applying biochar in organic systems. They will describe how biochar is a natural climate solution in today's agricultural systems, highlight which systems are optimal for biochar adoption and introduce a Biochar Decision Toolbox for farmers and agricultural professionals to use to decide if biochar is right for their farm.

The content in this session is designed for farmers with 5+ years of farming experience.

ONIONS MAKE THE MEAL: GROWING ONIONS ORGANICALLY

Jeff Poppen, Long Hungry Creek Farm

The field needs to be cleared of weeds and cover crops as soon as the spring ground can be worked. Preparation for an onion crop really starts the previous autumn. Onions taught Jeff Poppen the value of hoeing before he sees any weeds, keeping the ground loose and ensuring that capillary action is moving moisture upward. Jeff will discuss soil requirements; growing and buying plants; setting, hoeing and cultivating onions; and harvesting, sorting and storing onions.

HOW TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE FARM

Fatima Jackson, Action Jackson Farms

Candace Pollock-Moore, Southern

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE)

Paul Vincelli, University of Kentucky

Farmers are creative and innovative, always testing new ideas on their farms to boost profits, conserve the environment and improve the community's quality of life. Join this session to learn how to set up a research project on the farm to test real-world problems in sustainable

FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENT "STRETCH BREAK"

RIGHT WALL OF MEETING ROOM A

January 25 | 8:25-8:40 am & 2:30-2:45 pm
with Monet Proctor

This standing- or chair-based stretch break prioritizes the sustained well-being of our farming community. Acknowledging the tendency of farmers to sometimes focus on the health of the farm more than their personal health, this session will guide participants through everyday accessible movements to keep them grounded and functioning optimally - positively impacting farmer wellness and farm function. No experience is necessary; all are welcome!

Meet the Stretch Break Leaders at oak-ky.org/speakers or use this QR code:



SESSION INFORMATION CONTINUED

agriculture and find solutions with both reliable data and practical results. First, Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) staff and a farmer applicant will share information on SSARE's Producer Grants and discuss the various sections of the grant call. During the second part of the session, participants will learn to identify a research question, generate a hypothesis, set up controls and treatments, design an experiment, collect and analyze data and draw useful conclusions.

The content in this session is designed for farmers with 5+ years of farming experience.

SESSIONS | 1:15-2:30 PM

WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON POOP? MANURE CHARACTERISTICS AND APPLICATION RATES

Tammy Barnes, National Center for
Appropriate Technology (NCAT)
Randy Smallwood, Natural Resources
Conservation Service (NRCS)

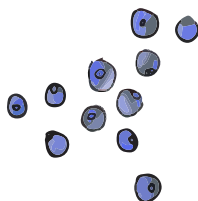
Livestock manure has value in production systems, benefitting plants and promoting soil health. However, not all manures are the same. They vary depending on the livestock species and manure characteristics like particular nutrient concentrations. Join this session to learn about the benefits of livestock manure for row crop and diversified vegetable farms, the ideal application rates and timing and USDA organic regulations. Properly managing manure application protects Kentucky's waterways and helps farmers reduce fertilizer costs, increase the soil's organic matter and micronutrients, improve soil structure, increase water filtration and reduce runoff.

The content in this session is designed for farmers with 5+ years of farming experience.

CROPS UNDER COVER! REAPING THE REWARDS OF PROTECTIVE ROW COVERS

John Bell, Elmwood Stock Farm
Maggie Dungan, Salad Days Farm
Katie Fiske, University of Kentucky
Entomology
David Gonthier, University of Kentucky
Elaine Losekamp, University of Kentucky
Entomology
Keith McKenzie, Knob Hill Farm
Sharon Stone, Two Suns Farm

Insect pests, weeds, diseases and climate events such as heavy rains, droughts, fluctuating temperatures and high winds pose significant challenges for organic vegetable and fruit growers. This session will explore protective row covers as a multi-faceted solution to these issues. A grower panel will share their trials and innovations, and researchers will discuss the pros and cons of various crops and share strategies for getting the best return on investment. The session will conclude with an invitation for growers to participate in on-farm demonstrations in 2025 by the Crops Under Cover team at the University of Kentucky.



USING THE POWER OF VISUAL MERCHANDIZING TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS

Chelsea Barbour, High Five Farm
Kayla Carey, Kentucky Flower Market
Brett Wolff, University of Kentucky Center
for Crop Diversification

An attractive and intentional retail space can draw customers in and help them feel comfortable and engaged while buying local goods from farmers. Brett Wolff from the UK Center for Crop Diversification will offer principles and key concepts in visual merchandising and Chelsea Barbour of High Five Farm and Kayla Carey of the Kentucky Flower Market will weigh in with practical and creative ideas they use to make their markets look great and perform well with customers. Farmers will learn tips for perfecting their market displays and bring their signage to the next level to attract new customers.



MEET THE SATURDAY SPEAKERS

View speaker biographies and photos on the OAK website at oak-ky.org/speakers. View a printed copy at the OAK registration table, or use this QR code:



SESSION INFORMATION CONTINUED

SESSIONS | 2:45-3:45 PM

HOW TO FARM FOREVER

Joseph Monroe, Valley Spirit Farm
David Robb, Eden Prairie Farm

In this session Joseph Monroe and David Robb will delve into the history of market gardening and how it has informed their farming journeys, sharing what they've learned and how their farms have changed in the process. Special attention will be given to appropriately scaled operations of various sizes, understanding direct-to-consumer markets, making investment decisions, managing relationships and how to farm as you age, including both daily practices and farm planning.

ORGANIC MENTORSHIP: THE COMPASS TO SUCCESS

Kenya Abraham, Organic Association of Kentucky
Jesse Buie, Ole Brook Organics
Holly Chiantaretto, Hallow Springs Farm
Evelenia Mitchell, PercyAnnie Farms

Why Organic Mentorship? Organic farmers often identify mentorship as a critical component of their beginning stages. Whether you're already organic, on a mission to transition or organic-curious, join this panel discussion to learn how mentorship is key to success in organic transition from those involved in Kentucky's Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). Farmers interested in transitioning to organic will learn how the mentorship relationship provides significant resources through technical assistance in organic practices and certification, USDA-certified organic processes and regulation requirements. Experienced producers will learn how they can make an impact in the work of building Kentucky's organic community.

PRACTICAL POLLINATOR SUPPORT FOR YOUR FARM

Kevin Archer, Dandelion Ridge Farm
Lexi Gauger, University of Kentucky

Everyone knows to plant more flowers to "save the bees," but do these strategies truly work to support pollinators, boost crop yields and conserve wildlife? Learn about methods that will work for different production systems and farm goals so that farmers can get the most "bang for your buck" from different pollinator conservation strategies, evaluating the cost, maintenance and land area of different methods and plant species. Hear a farmer's first-hand account of the successes and challenges of on-farm pollinator conservation practices and learn about funding sources that can help farmers implement the methods explored in this session.

SESSIONS | 4:00-5:00 PM

FARMER FORUM: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND COLLECTIVE RESOURCES FOR KENTUCKY ORGANIC FARMERS

Farmers, are you looking for more time with your peers to build community and learn from one another? Join this interactive session, guided by the principles of Open Space Technology, where participants will gather for small group conversations centered on building collective resources for Kentucky's organic farmers. Farmers will collaboratively select subtopics to connect around shared interests and needs, discuss their experiences, ask one another questions and collectively brainstorm actions that could bolster Kentucky's organic and sustainable agriculture. This session is generative and led by farmer discussion, so participants are expected to participate fully for a successful and productive dialogue.

DROUGHT RESISTANCE AND INTERNATIONAL CROPS IN THE AGE OF CLIMATE CRISIS

Mateo Barnett, Common Earth Gardens
Om Ha, Mindat Community Garden

As the climate changes and weather patterns become more unpredictable, it is harder to count on regular rain to irrigate crops. This session will explore international drought-resistant crops like amaranth, roselle, squash and corn that have been growing successfully and feeding families in Louisville for years with no irrigation from planting to harvest. Hear from a Burmese farmer about the medicinal and nutritional properties of these crops sold at the Louisville market, and the marketing materials they use to educate buyers. A shopper at the market will share a testimonial from the consumer's perspective. This session will conclude with a discussion of how Kentuckians can strengthen their understanding of climate justice and resilience by learning from Kentucky's international agrarian population.

PRINCIPLES OF CONTOUR LINES' AGROFORESTRY

Thomas Leonard, Contour Lines/
Modern Harvest Farms

Contour Lines Corp. provides free trees and technical assistance to farmers in exchange for implementing soil conservation practices. This session focuses on the agroforestry practices that Contour Lines recommends in the US that limit planting and maintenance expenses and improve the survival rate of seedlings. Thomas Leonard will discuss contour farming, berms and swales, nitrogen-fixing support trees, chop and drop mulching and integration of cover crops into agroforestry systems.



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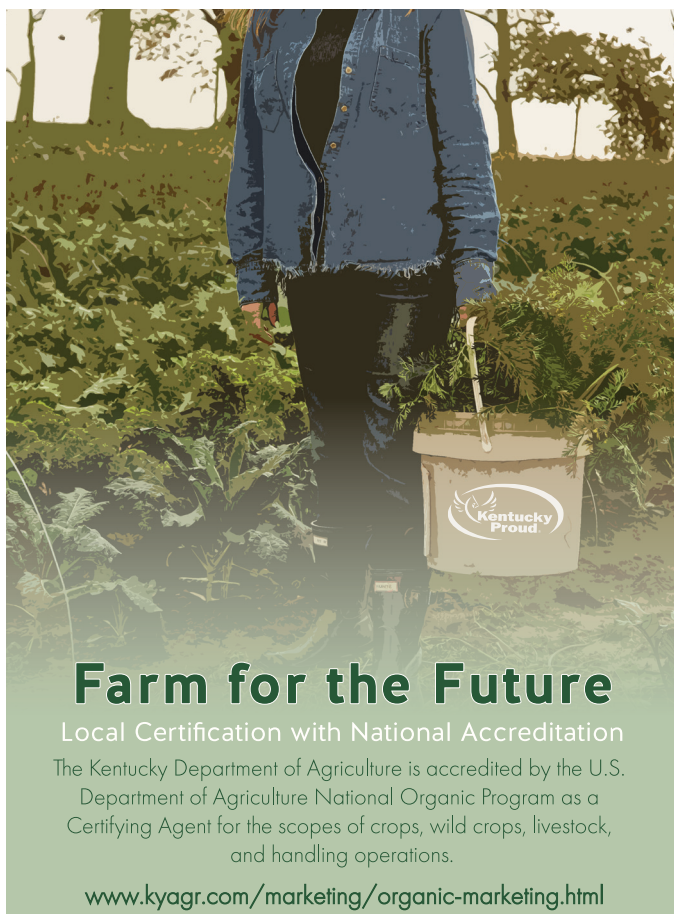


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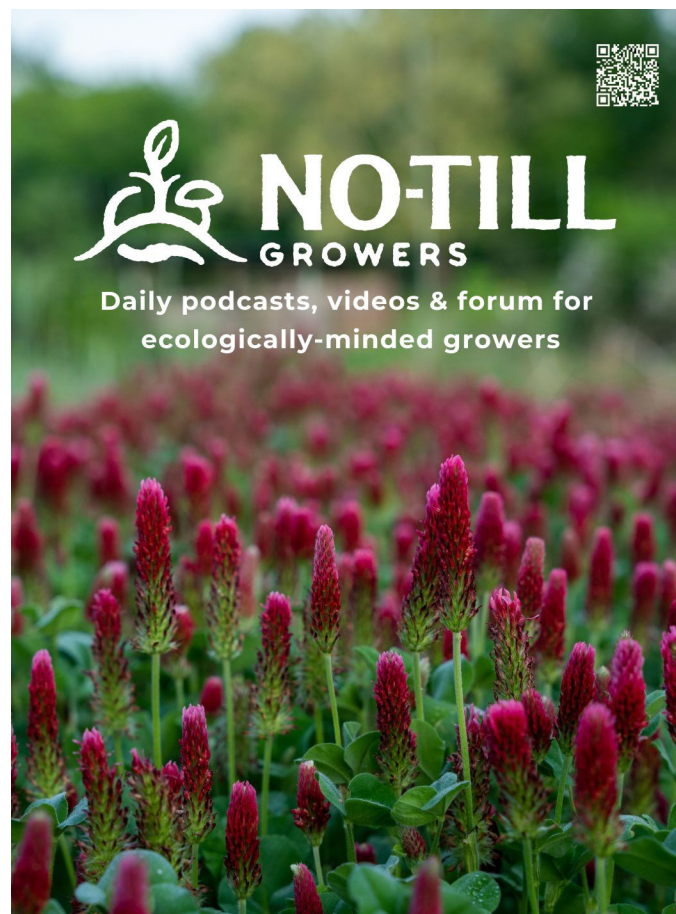



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The Kentucky Department of Agriculture is accredited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Program as a Certifying Agent for the scopes of crops, wild crops, livestock, and handling operations.

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CONFERENCE MEALS FROM KENTUCKY FARMS

We are grateful for the good food and the teams who provide lunch during the conference. Enjoy a menu of delicious options from Local's Food Hub and Pizza Pub on Thursday and Farm to Fork on Friday and Saturday. These chefs and businesses will keep everyone nourished and are committed to sourcing from Kentucky farms and celebrating local abundance.



GATHER & GROW GRATITUDE

We are thrilled to gather together with OAK's staff, Board of Directors and current and prospective members at this year's Gather and Grow Member Meeting and Social on Friday evening. Thank you to Alfalfa Catering and West Sixth Brewing for providing the fuel for our time together.



FOOD & BEVERAGE DONATIONS



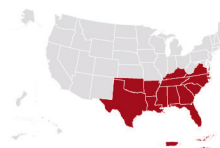
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Grow Appalachia works in communities across central Appalachia to create a vibrant, regional food system where healthy food is accessible to all. Grow Appalachia's approach is centered on supporting backyard and community gardens, providing technical assistance to small-scale farmers, operating a social enterprise, and distributing high quality food and nutrition programming to youth.

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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF KENTUCKY AGRICULTURE.

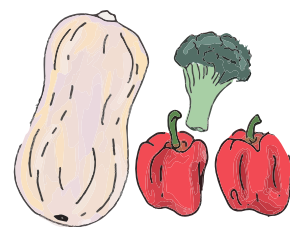
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With the help of one of our key initiatives, the Food Connection, the number of Good Agricultural Practices-audited farms in Kentucky has grown from six in 2016 to 84 today, expanding market opportunities and boosting sales for our farmers.

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OAK Conference Scholarships are supported by Grow Appalachia, Johnny's Selected Seeds, Kentucky SARE State Model Program and the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.